Dear Santa,

We are from Waveland and our home was at:

[redacted] Sycamore St. Waveland, MS 39576

We are now living at:

Address: Same

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

Phone No. [redacted]

Our family consists of:

Randy [redacted] 26, Cortney [redacted] 21,
Daiton [redacted] 4, Cameron [redacted] 2mths

Our Katrina experience was:

Write something special that you would like Santa to bring you or your family:

Randy [redacted] would like a refridgerator, (the one in the trailer isn't big enough!!) Cortney would love a washer & dryer!!! :) Daiton loves tractors & fire trucks. Cameron's only 2 mths, so anything age appropriate will do!

THANK YOU!

Please use back or another sheet of paper, if you want to write more. We want to hear your story.

Return by November 30th to:

Mayor's Office, City of Waveland, P. O. Box 539, Waveland, MS 39576

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When I first heard about Hurricane Katrina, I wasn't too worried. Every time a hurricane is supposedly coming our way, we pack up & leave, fearing the worst, & nothing ever happened. My husband & I watched it on the news every day, but weren't too worried. I woke up Sunday morning to my phone ringing. It was my mother. "It's a category 5! It's gonna be worse than Camille! Y'all have to leave!" My mother was a child when Camille hit & her & her family barely survived. Needless to say, if it sprinkles, she freaks! So anyway, up until that point, we were gonna go stay at the Ramada in Diamondhead. We had booked a room next to my husband's parents for monday night. Then the storm gained speed as well as strength. So we

then decided to go stay at my husband's brother's house on Edwin Ladner Rd. ~~They~~ Him & his wife & kids have always stayed for storms & nothing's ever happened. So thats where we went. It's a nice size house, about 2500 sq. ft. But with the amount of people there, let me tell you, it was cramped! There was over 20 people there! Most people just brought. a couple changes of clothes. Something told me when we were packing though, to take ~~there~~ the things that could not be replaced. My kids' baby books & pictures, my wedding pictures and cards that my husband gave me over the years, a letter my grandmother wrote to all of ~~them~~ her grand children on her deathbed, my oldest son's ~~1~~ first coloring "masterpieces". Thank God I did. I couldn't

imagine having lost all that along with my home. anyway, during the storm, we were all pretty scared, even the men, though they were trying not to show it. all around us trees were snapping like twigs and the wind was howling. we were in a brick house, but the wind was so strong that the house was creaking. we were watching the shingles & vinyl siding fly off the house next door, and a tree fall on the house across the street. a tornado went right on side the house! When it was all over, we were frantic to get to our homes to see what had happened. We got on the interstate (after going around too many obstacles to write), and when we got to the exit to go to

Bay St. Louis, we saw ~~it~~ that ~~was~~ all of 603 was completely under and so was part of the interstate. We were stunned! Even after seeing that though, I still never thought my house would be affected as bad as it was. So we went down the interstate & came up by the big Alligator sign, and thats as far as we could go. As far as the eye could see, was nothing but water. Every one just stood there in shock. I have never seen that much water. So when we realized it was pointless to stand there and stare at the water, we back to my brother in laws house. The next day all the men loaded up chainsaws and four wheelers so they could get to the houses, and the

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women would come a few hours later. So we waited. Finally, we got in our cars and drove down there. I will never forget the sights that I saw on that first drive through town. It was like a night mare I couldn't get out of. I live down waveland ave. on [redacted] Sycamore St, and my husband & other family members cut trees and moved debris [redacted] of waveland ave. It took them 5 hrs just to get it where we could ride four wheelers down the road. So we ride the four wheelers down to our house, and at first glance, it didn't look too bad. I could tell that the house wasn't level, & a few pieces of siding ~~was~~ were missing. When I went inside, & I was in for the shock of my life!

The fridge was flipped over, there was mud every where, the brand new couch we just finished paying for was ruined. I mean, it was just terrible. I could never explain what I felt when I walked through my home and saw everything. A thousand memories went through my head... My oldest son was a little over a year old when we were ~~building~~ finishing the inside, and I remember him toddling around, [redacted] picking up my husband's tools as soon as he turned his head! I remembered decorating the house during Christmas, and carving a pumpkin for our first Halloween in the "new" house. I remembered bringing home our second son from the hospital, & spending those first few [redacted] nights he [redacted] was home, & exhausted,

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but just so glad to have him home. I also thought about the many dinners we had sitting at that table as a family. I miss our home. I can still [illegible] remember the clean way it smelled. My youngest won't remember [illegible] our first home, but my oldest still ~~cries~~ cries for his room. Thats what really makes it hard. Now were living in a FEMA trailer, cramped, aggravated, and on each others nerves, but we're happy to be alive and still have one another. We'll get through this, and we'll build another house and make it a home.